

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 064270
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:SWLEWIS:DEF
APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY
NEA:ALATHERTON,JR.
INR:HHTSAUNDERS
S/ TGMARTIN

-----094699 140050Z /65
O 140017Z MAR 78 ZFF6
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 064270

NODIS
WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, LE, IS, U.S., MILI

SUBJECT: PROBABLE RETALIATORY STRIKE BY ISRAEL INTO
SOUTHERN LEBANON.

REF: TEL AVIV 3386

1. BEFORE WEIZMAN DEPARTED NEW YORK TO RETURN TO ISRAEL
SATURDAY EVENING, AMBASSADOR LEWIS SPOKE WITH HIM BY PHONE
TO OFFER CONDOLENCES FOR THE TERRORIST ATROCITIES.
2. LEWIS TOLD WEIZMAN HE COULD UELL IMAGINE THE LEVEL OF
ANGER MIXED WITH SORROW WHICH WEIZMAN WOULD FIND AMONG HIS
FELLOW ISRAELIS ON HIS ARRIVAL, AND THAT THERE WOULD BE
MANY VOICES CALLING FOR MASSIVE RETALIATION. HE SAID HE
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HOPED THAT WEIZMAN WOULD DO HIS BEST TO "RESTRAIN THE HOT
HEADS" AND TO KEEP BEFORE EVERYONE THE BROADER SETTING
WITHIN WHICH THIS TRAGIC DRAMA WAS BEING PLAYED OUT. OB-
VIOUSLY, LEWIS SAID, IT WAS VITAL THAT WEIZMAN AND HIS
COLLEAGUES RECALL THE OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE OF TRYING TO
KEEP THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE FROM BEING DERAILED BY THIS
EFFORT PERPETRATED BY THE FATAH. WEIZMAN SAID THAT HE

UNDERSTOOD WHAT LEWIS WAS SAYING, BUT THAT WE HAD TO UNDERSTAND HOW PROFOUND AN IMPACT THE TERRORIST ATTACK HAD MADE

ON THE ISRAELI PEOPLE, AND THAT IT COULD NOT CONCEIVABLY GO UNPUNISHED.

3. IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS AT DEPARTMENT'S PRESS BRIEFING MONDAY, SPOKESMAN MADE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY CRAFTED COMMENTS:

"THE TERRORIST ACT OBVIOUSLY PRESENTS ISRAEL WITH A VERY PAINFUL AND SERIOUS DILEMMA. IT HAS LEGITIMATE SECURITY INTERESTS WHICH MUST BE PROTECTED. AT THE SAME TIME NO ONE WANTS TO ADD TO THE SUFFERING AND LOSS OF INNOCENT LIVES ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD." WHEN PRESSED, SPOKESMAN MADE THIS ADDITIONAL COMMENT.:

..."THIS PARTICULARLY BRUTAL ACT OF TERRORISM SIMPLY MUST NOT BE PERMITTED TO PREVENT THOSE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MATTERS THAT YOU RAISE AND OTHER ISSUES IN DISPUTE IN THE MIDDLE EAST...THE VIOLENCE WE DEPLORE DOES NOT CHANGE THE POSITIONS WHICH WE HAVE STATED A NUMBER OF TIMES."

4. IN LINE WITH REFTTEL AND ACCUMULATING EVIDENCE OF MILITARY PREPARATIONS, CHARGE SHOULD SEEK EARLIEST
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OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERSCORE TO WEIZMAN CONCERNS ALREADY EXPRESSED BY AMBASSADOR LEWIS. HE SHOULD MAKE SURE WEIZMAN IS AWARE OF COMMENTS TODAY BY DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN AND DRAW ON THEM AS WELL IN HIS COMMENTS. HE SHOULD REFER TO TRAGIC LOSS OF INNOCENT LEBANESE CIVILIANS DURING RETALIATORY AIR STRIKES LAST FALL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INSTRUCTIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, ATROCITIES, TERRORISTS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE064270
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SWLEWIS:DEF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840176-1431, N780003-0429
Format: TEL
From: STATE NEA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780370/aaaachot.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 841d6ec7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 78 TEL AVIV 3386
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 aug 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3339020
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROBABLE RETALIATORY STRIKE BY ISRAEL INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON
TAGS: PEPR, MILI, PINS, LE, IS, US
To: TEL AVIV WHITE HOUSE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbcc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/841d6ec7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014